

April 7, 1960

Dr. Roger Herriott
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Dear Roger:

To yours of March 21.

The idea of a monophyletic system of life on earth, deduced from the ubiquity of DNA and of proteins, has been widely current for almost as long as I can remember. I am sure it has been stated, at least implicitly, many times. In fact I think there has been some polemic discussion in the American Scientist during the last couple of years devoted not to supporting but to an attempt to refute this idea. Or perhaps this was in the American Naturalist. When I first read your letter I would have sworn that I had repeatedly mentioned monophyletism in my own writings but I have to admit, after having gone through the papers that I thought were most likely, that most of them contain something short of a crisp, explicit statement. Unless the other references I mentioned do this there may well be some point in driving the tack home.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

Enc.

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